

## The Adventures of Ciad, Son of the King of Norway.

A TRADITIONAL FOLK TALE FROM THE ANCIENT GAELIC

By Seumas MacManus.

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Ciad, Ceud and Mith-Ceud were the three sons of the king of Norway. All over the world they were celebrated as fine, brave fellows, and they had come to think themselves so, too.

On a day after Ciad had been walking by the shore for a long time, thinking he came back to his father's castle. He said to his father and his brothers: "Ceud and Mith-Ceud and Ciad are celebrated far and wide as great heroes and gallant champions, but I have just been thinking, do we ever do anything great. I think it is not right to bear the name of champion without having done anything to earn it. I will leave my father's castle and go away and prove my right to the title of Hero, or, if I fail, I will never come back."

The king of Norway tried hard to persuade him not to go, but Ciad would

not be persuaded. He said: "I am ashamed of myself for bearing a title that I have not deserved. Then, when the king found that Ciad was bent on going, he asked him to take the pick of his men to accompany him in his adventures."

Ciad said: "No, I'll go by myself." The king could not induce him to take any men.

Early next morning Ciad was up and breakfasted. He took his arms and his shield with him, and started off. He went to the seashore and traveled away, and away, along it.

When he had been traveling for three hours, he saw a speck far out at sea, but it was coming nearer and getting bigger every minute.

At last he saw it was a boat, and when it came still nearer, he saw that a woman sat in it. When it was nearer still, he saw that she was a very beautiful lady.

He stood his ground, as the boat was coming straight toward him.

At length the boat's keel grated on the gravel, and Ciad helped the young lady on shore.

He said: "Beautiful lady, who are you? Where do you come from? Or where do you go alone?"

"Before I answer that," she said, "give me your name; for I will not reply to those questions unless you are of royal blood."

He said: "I am of royal blood. I am Ciad, son of the king of Norway."

She said: "I am glad that I am Dark Eye, the daughter of the king of France. From France I have come, but where I am going I do not know. For a year and a day I have been wandering over the seas in this little boat, seeking for a champion. A cruel stepmother has laid a spell on me,

is, and even if you could find that, you would lose your life in trying to take the bottle of loca."

Ciad said that better men than he had already lost their lives in the search, so it would be no shame for him if he, too, lost his.

His father asked him to take nine times nine men with him, if he was bent on fulfilling his Geasa.

But Ciad said: "No, I shall not take nine men. Give me a ship and let my brothers Ceud and Mith-Ceud go along with me. If it is possible to get the Bottle of loca of the Queen of the Island of the Riches of the World, I will get it. If it is impossible, then your nine times nine men of men would be lost to you, as well as us."

His father gave him the best ship in the harbor, and with Ceud and Mith-Ceud, Ciad, on the morrow, set out on his quest.

They sailed for two days and two nights without meeting any adventure; and on the third day they saw a speck on the sea, far off. Very soon they saw it was a ship coming towards them.

The nearer they came to it, they found that it was very large, and when they were very near, they saw that in the ship was one person, a great giant, greater than any giant in Norway.

When the strange ship came up beside them, the giant asked Ciad who he was, and what right he had to sail these waters.

Ciad said: "My name is not ashamed of. I am Ciad, the son of the king of Norway, a hero. Who are you, and by what right do you question me?"

He said: "I am the Giant of the Great Seas, and I allow no ship upon these waters."

Ciad said: "If that is your law, I am sorry for you, for it is going to be broken this day."

The giant raised his spear, and Ciad, without waiting, leaped aboard the giant's ship with his spear in his hand, and with his shield before him.

Ciad and the giant of the Great Seas fell to, and fought as two men never fought before. The fight was so loud and so fierce and so terrible, that the seals came from the North Seas, and the whales came from the ponds of the ocean, and the little red fishes came up from the sea-meadows, and gathered around the ships to watch the fight.

The giant was brave and a great fighter, without doubt; his strength and skill were wonderful; but the

brave spirit of Ciad was greater than the giant's strength and skill. When the sun was two hours above the eastern waters, they had begun the fight, and when it was going down into the western waters, the fight was not ended. But it was very nearly so, for the giant was weakening, and soon he would have been beaten, but he gave three calls, and a blue mist came down from the skies and wrapped his ship round.

When the mist cleared away, the giant and the ship were gone, and Ciad was struggling in the water.

Ciad and Mith-Ceud took him aboard, and found he was so badly abused, and so weak from fighting and loss of blood, that there was nothing for it but to return home; so home they went.

At home Ciad lay in his bed for three days, with his father's doctors attending him, but he did not move.

At the end of that time he got up and asked his father to give him thirty men and another ship, that he might set out on his journey again.

His father tried to persuade him not to go, but it was of no use. Ciad said if he did not fulfill his Geasa, he could never hold up his head with men again.

Then he set out with two ships, Ceud, Mith-Ceud and himself in one ship, and his father's thirty men in the other.

They sailed for three days and three nights in the same direction in which they had gone before, and on the morning of the fourth day, he saw two specks on the waters, far off. They were coming towards him. They got larger every moment. He saw they were two ships. When they came nearer, he saw the giant standing in one, and a host of men in the other.

When they came quite close, Ciad hailed the giant of the Great Seas, and asked him did he mean battle.

The giant replied: "If you do not mean battle, I do not."

Where are you going, then?" Ciad asked.

The giant said: "I'm going in search of the Riches of the World."

"Where is that to be found?" said Ciad.

"It's on an island in the Far World," the giant said, "and is owned by the Queen of the Island of the Riches of the World."

"Then I'll go with you," Ciad said. The giant agreed to this, and all sailed.

They sailed away and away, far further than I could tell you, and twice as far as you could tell me, until at length they reached the island.

The giant said: "Ciad, you and your men on the island first and demand the Riches of the World."

Ciad agreed to this, and sent his men on the island on a morning, but when night fell they had not come back.

Next day Ciad himself landed and went in search of them.

In the second valley, he found his thirty men lying in the forest.

He said: "This is the Giant's doing. So he went back to his ship and told his two brothers if they would engage the Giant's men, he would engage the Giant himself."

This was agreed to, and they attacked the Giant and his men.

A fiercer or bloodier battle was never fought on sea or land, and the noise and din were so loud, and the battling was so fierce, that the seals came down from the North seas, the whales up from the ponds of the ocean, and the little fishes, too, from the sea-meadows, gathering around the ship to watch the fight.

For the length of a day they battled, and when the sun was one hour above the western waters, Ceud, Mith-Ceud and the Giant's men, all of them dead, but Ciad and the Giant still battled.

When the hoop of the sun was on the waters, the Giant, fine himself, weakening too fast, gave three calls. Ciad saw the blue mist coming down, he gave a bound into the air and drove his spear to the Giant's heart, and killed him.

Then he went on the island and stood his two brothers up against a rock facing the east, with helmets on their heads, and shields and spears in their hands.

On the next morning he set out to travel over the island, and at night he came to a little hut where he found one old hag.

He asked her if she had no company. She said: "Yes, I have plenty of that."

He asked to see her company.

She struck her staff on the hearthstone, and up came nine other hags as old and as ugly as herself. She struck the staff again upon the hearthstone, and then they were the nine most beautiful damsels Ciad had ever seen.

The hag said: "If you stay with me you can have your choice of these nine beautiful damsels for your wife."

But Ciad remembered Dark Eye of France, and also remembered his Geasa, and he said to the hag, he would have none of them.

Then she struck her staff upon the ground angrily, and they all disappeared.

He asked for supper and a bed for the night, and the old hag gave him the toes and the tongue of a rabbit for supper. She gave him a heather bed that scored and cut him, and an old black cat for a bed-fellow.

In the morning he told the hag that he was looking for the queen of this island.

She said: "I am the queen."

"If that is so," he said, "I demand the bottle of loca and the Riches of the World."

"That," she said, "I am glad you cannot have."

"If I cannot have it," he said, "I will take your staff and break your old bones."

"It's like a hero to do that," she said, scoffingly, "but even if you made meal of my old bones, you would not be nearer the bottle of loca and the Riches of the World."

Ciad asked how that was.

She said: "Feach-An-Chruic (the Terrible Man of the Hill) took away the bottle of loca and the Riches of the World from me 200 years ago."

"I do not believe it," said Ciad.

But she took him outside and showed him the hoof tracks of the Feach's horses, where last night's rains were still lying in them.

"Where does Feach-An-Chruic live?" Ciad asked.

"He lives a third part of the world from here," the Hag said.

"How may I get there?" Ciad said.

"As best you can," said the Hag.

"By this faith, and by that," said Ciad, seizing her staff, "I'll make meal of your old bones if you don't direct me."

She took him down to the shore, took a black whistle from her pocket and blew on it, when a little Red Fish appeared on top of the sea.

"There," she said, "follow that fish, and it will lead you to Feach-An-Chruic."

Ciad swam up his ship, hoisted his sails and went off after the little Red Fish.

He went away for long, long days and long, long nights, sailing one-third of the whole world, until at length the little fish ran into a wood-bordered bay. Ciad anchored his ship here, and went on shore.

He traveled over the mountains for three days and three nights, and on the fourth day he found Feach-An-Chruic dividing beef among his men.

Ciad walked up to him and asked for a bit of the beef.

"By the faith, no!" said Feach-An-Chruic. "But now that you're here I'll save my beef."

"How is that?" said Ciad.

"Because," he said, "the king of Persia, when he got the Riches of the World, called together at once the Seven Wizards of the East, and had them lay spells on him, so that no man could ever conquer him."

"I'm sorry for that," said Ciad, "but I'll not return home; I'll travel on to meet my fate."

Ciad traveled on for a long time. He came to a plain that was covered with dead men, and on one of the dead men he saw a gold boot and a silver boot.

He got hold of the gold boot and tried to pull it off, and the man whom he thought was dead struck him with the other boot and tossed him.

"Who are you?" said Ciad.

"I am Swift Sword, son of the king of Spain, one blow of whose sword has the power of 1,000 men for 1,000 years, and would blow the sky dry," he said. "This is my army that I brought into the Eastern World, and all of them are killed."

"I am glad to find you," said Ciad, "for I am your cousin Ciad, the son of the king of Norway. Come with me."

Ciad and Swift Sword set out, and traveled on and on until they came to the lake of the Singing Shore, and traveled by it until they reached a small house. As they came up to the house

they saw a pigeon fly from the chimney at every step they took.

"Because my father, the king of Persia, said, 'I will not be conquered by living man, so you can never force from him the bottle of loca and the Riches of the World.'"

"Then I'll die in trying," said Ciad.

"Isn't it better to get them and live?" said Ciad.

"But I cannot do that," said Ciad.

"If you are a very great hero, there is just a chance for you," said Pearl Mouth.

Ciad asked her what that chance was, and she told him that if he would find Mountain of Fierceness, the son of the king of Greece, and conquer him, he would bring back to her Blue Gold, she would get for him from her father what he wanted.

"Then," he said, "I shall do that."

"Not so easily," said Pearl Mouth, "for no one in the world can overcome Mountain of Fierceness unless he has the Bualadh of Soul of Steel, Prince of India."

"Then," said Ciad, "I will set off and find that."

Away he started and did not stop until he reached India. He demanded Bualadh from Soul of Steel.

"That I will not give you," said Soul of Steel.

Then Ciad said, "I will fight you for it."

"You will only throw away your life," said Soul of Steel, "for no man can conquer me but one."

"And who is that one?" said Ciad.

"The man who can kill the Giant of the Great Seas," said Soul of Steel.

"Then," said Ciad, "I'm that man; and he told his story back to Soul of Steel."

Soul of Steel said he was a great hero, surely, and that he was glad to give him the Bualadh.

"Break a branch," he said, "from that oak tree that grows before my castle, and it will give you Bualadh."

Ciad went to the oak tree and broke a branch, but when it fell to the ground it sprang up into a great tree, and, with every other branch he broke the same thing happened.

The Soul of Steel came out and gave him his cloak. He said, "Spread this over the branch."

He broke another branch, which fell on the cloak, and he carried it off and went in search of the Mountain of Fierceness.

He traveled away and away before him, far further than I can tell you, and twice as far as you could tell me, over night, hill and hollow, mountain, moor and scrub, lone valley and green glen, until at last, and at length, he found in Africa, Mountain of Fierceness with all his men, gathered together on a hilltop.

He walked up to them and asked what was happening.

They said Mountain of Fierceness was being married to the Queen of the Indies. He pushed his way to where the priests were marrying them.

Mountain of Fierceness asked the stranger what he wanted.

Ciad said, "I have come to conquer you."

"That, my good man, you can't do," said Mountain of Fierceness. "It's better for you to return to your home, for I'm getting married."

"I'll never return until I've taken your life, or made you grant me one request," said Ciad.

"I'll not give you my life, and I'll not grant you one request," said Mountain of Fierceness, "but I'll split you on the point of my spear, if you don't leave this and go whence you came."

Then Ciad asked him to step out for a fight.

"I don't want to take your life or any man's today," said Mountain of Fierceness, "as I am to be married. Yet no man can overcome me unless he has Bualadh from Soul of Steel, the Prince of India."

"And that I have," said Ciad, throwing the oak branch at his feet.

Mountain of Fierceness looked at this, and then said: "Will you spare my life?"

"On one condition," said Ciad, "and that is that you tell me where Blue Gold, Prince of Africa, is, whom you carried off from his wife a year ago, and how I may get him."

"Where he is and what he is, I can tell you," said Mountain of Fierceness, "and how you may get him, but I very much doubt if ever you can get him. He is a wild pigeon in the Eastern Skies—nothing can catch him but the magic net of the King of Ireland's Druid, and this net could only be purchased by one-third of the riches of the world; and nothing can disenchant him but nine grains of wheat that lie at the bottom of the Well of the World's end, which can only be emptied by 3,000 men in 3,000 years."

When Ciad heard this he bade him good-bye. He sent Swift Sword to Ireland to get the loan of the magic net of the king of Ireland's Druid, on the promise of paying him one-third of the Riches of the World, and told Swift

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